DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 168 582 IR 007 124

TITLE	Women in the Media: The Beirut Consultation. (Beirut, Lebanon, February 19-24, 1978).
INSTITUTION	World Association for Christian Communication, London (England).
PUB DATE	Feb 78
NOTE	38p.
AVAILABLE FROM	World Association for Christian Communication, 122 King's Road, London SW3 4TR England
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Church Programs; Church Role; *Feminism; *International Organizations; *Mass Media; Sex Discrimination; Sex Stereotypes; *Working Women

ABSTRACT

This report presents a summary of the experiences shared and presentations at a meeting attended by 20 women from different cultures, backgrounds, and situations who met to consider the role of women in the media, the responsible use of media, and the image of women portrayed there. Their main task was to find ways of helping the three sponsoring organizations--the World Association for Christian Communication, the World Council of Churches, and the World YWCA--to take action on the problems which exist in all countries. An outline of the problem areas and suggested practical guidelines are included, as well as the keynote address, a presentation on women in ecumenical communications work, and reports from Sweden, the Arab world, Asia, the Philippines, the Caribbean, and Africa. A participant list is provided. (Author/RAO)

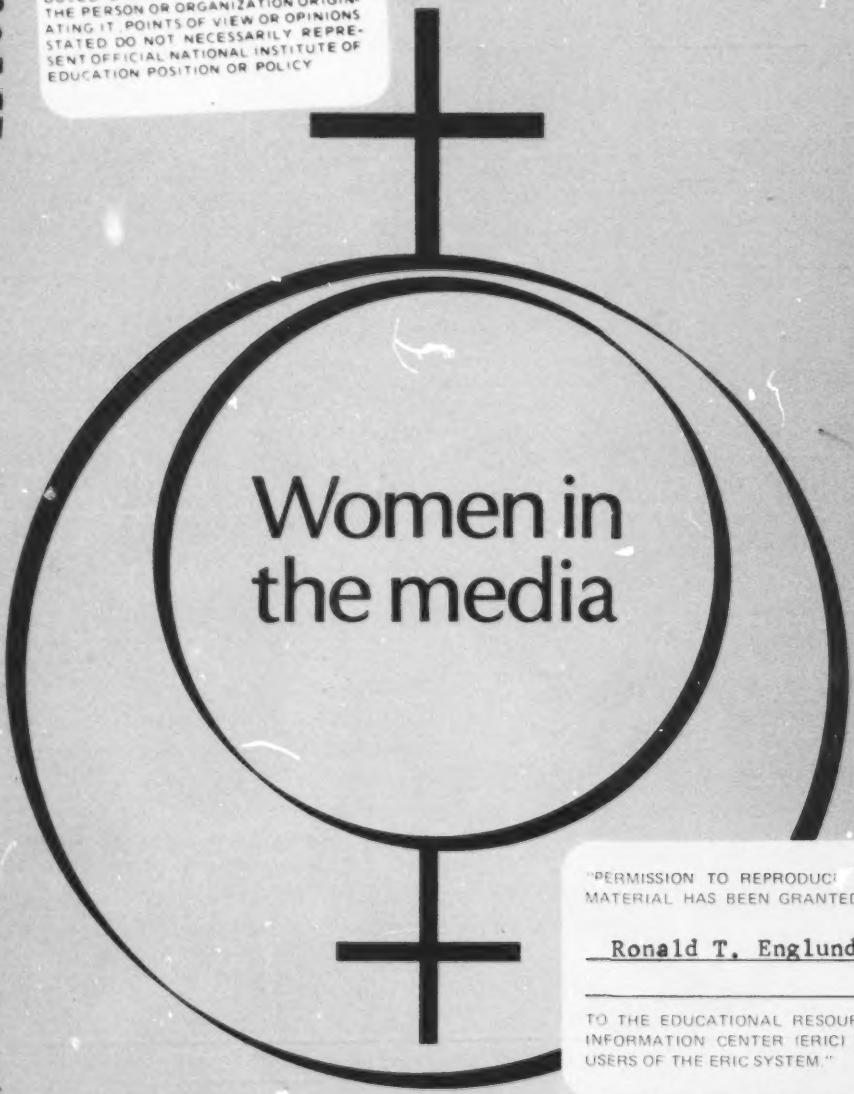
****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

THE BEIRUT CONSULTATION 1978

ED168582

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY



Women in the media

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Ronald T. Englund

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

I R007124

WOMEN IN THE MEDIA
The Beirut Consultation

February 19-24, 1978
Beirut, Lebanon

Contents

Introduction	5
Statement and Recommendations	7
Keynote Address	
"Women in Christian Communication"	9
Doris E Hess	
"Women in Ecumenical Communications Work"	12
Betty Thompson	
Reports	
from Sweden - Monica Boethius	15
from the Arab World - Rose Ghunayyib	19
Emily Waseallah	20
Leila Shaheen da Cruz	21
from Asia - Violet Coomarasamy	23
from the Philippines, Caribbean, Africa	31
Closing Worship - Margaret Dunn	33
Participants	37

---

sponsored by:
World Association for Christian Communication
World Young Women's Christian Association
World Council of Churches

additional copies of this report may be ordered from the
World Association for Christian Communication
122 King's Road,
London SW3 4TR, England.

Typesetting and origination by:
Type Out, 2 Gleneagle Road, Streatham, London SW16.
Printing by:
Mitcham Printers Ltd, Mitcham, Surrey.

4

Introduction

Sponsored by the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC), World Council of Churches (WCC) and the World YWCA, 20 women met at the Near East School of Theology (The Nest) in Beirut February 19-24, 1978. They came from different cultures, backgrounds and situations. They came from different countries - Barbados, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Fiji, West Germany, Greece, Lebanon, Malaysia, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Sweden, Switzerland, the USA and Zambia. But one thing they had in common - their concern for "Women in the Media." This was the title of the consultation, and they were concerned not only for women in the media, but also for the responsible use of the media and the image of women portrayed there.

The Beirut Consultation was not an isolated event. It grew out of the new awareness in the WACC of the need for women's participation in global communications. It was part of the series of Women in the Media consultations which began in the Caribbean in 1975. It differed from the earlier meetings in that it was geared to action rather than discussion. Based on the assumption that the talking was done, this group, instead of wasting time lamenting a problem which obviously exists in all countries, set about trying to find practical solutions.

At the same time, participants also looked at their surroundings. Good communication can never exist in isolation from the realities around it. The troubled situation in Lebanon was brought vividly alive through a presentation by Gabriel Habib, General Secretary of the Middle East Council of Churches, and by excursions through some of the ruined parts of Beirut, along the beautiful sweep of coast where the Phoenicians built their ports and to ruins of quite another kind at Byblos.

Background of the Beirut Consultation

The background of the consultation itself was outlined by Dr. Doris E. Hess, Executive Secretary for Communication, Board of Global Ministries, United Methodist Church, in her opening remarks. She spoke of the new WACC which, despite efforts to have a 20 per cent quota for women's representation on its new Central committee, came into being in 1975 as a "man's organization."

The Women in the Media consultations which preceded the Beirut meeting were not the result of WACC planning, but of regional needs and the vision of women, whose demands for representation, voice and action were urgent. Through these meetings and other

similar ones in various parts of the world, many women have become aware, for the first time, of their own image in the media, the role and status being assigned to them there, and the influence they could have through participation. But behind these small beginnings lies a great potential of women performing the tasks of modern communication, in equality with men, and being involved equally with them where the decisions and action take place.

It is this potential which concerns the leadership of the new WACC, and this is what concerned the women meeting in Beirut. Their main task was to find ways of helping the three sponsoring organisations move forward into action, and to this end they produced recommendations which outline problem areas and suggest practical guidelines.

This report is the summary of their work. What is offered here is not a detailed account - minutes are available for those who want them - but a collection of experiences which were shared, exchanges which were meaningful and presentations which sparked ideas and enthusiasm. It is hoped that the report of these experiences, which stirred the consciousness of the participants at Beirut, will also help and interest others as they work on a problem which affects the lives of women in all countries.

Women in the Media
Statement and Recommendations

The Beirut Consultation, February 19-24, 1978

As representatives of the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC), the World Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) and the World Council of Churches (WCC), attending the consultation on Women in the Media, in Beirut, Lebanon, February 19-24, 1978, we express our concern regarding the image of women portrayed in the media, the role and status of women working in the media, as well as with the media as a whole.

Recommendations on this issue have already come from "Women in the Media" consultations held in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean, World YWCA Council Meetings and the WCC.

Our special concerns are:

1. That the content of mass media programmes should:
   - reflect human realities, not distort them
   - include women's viewpoints and values
   - endeavour to build an awareness of all exploitation, and especially exploitation of women
   - be free of sex stereotyping
   - encourage real dialogue

2. That women working in the media organizations have:
   - equal opportunity with men to move into decision-making positions

3. That the production and utilization of other media be encouraged, including:
   - low-cost media
   - folk media
   - traditional communications skills
   - other audio visual methods

7

We therefore submit to the three sponsoring agencies of this consultation, namely WACC, World YWCA and WCC, the following recommendations:

1. We recommend that studies be instituted that will provide information on:
   — the present situation of women at decision-making levels in media organizations, and in all member organizations of the three agencies.
   — the content of media training courses in secular and Christian media education institutions.
   — the image of women in the media.

2. We recommend that funds be included in the budgets of the three agencies' local, national, regional and central committees, for meetings of women in the media, so that women can assess their own values, contribution and special role in communications, and to encourage their increased participation at the regional level.

3. We recommend the encouragement of training courses in the production and utilisation of low-cost media, folk media, traditional communication skills and other audio visual and group participation methods, especially for use in rural development programmes, and other projects where women are often involved.

4. We recommend provision of additional training courses for the upgrading and awareness-building of personnel in media organizations, especially women, and those in executive positions.

5. We recommend provision of opportunities for women in mass media positions, and those planning careers in mass media, that will expand their present technical and management expertise and broaden their horizons.

6. We recommend the encouragement of all participatory media projects that help to build a greater awareness of the problems and concerns of women and community groups, e.g. experimental newspapers, access broadcasting, channel TV, and satellite transmissions.

These recommendations are made in a spirit of constructive and creative dialogue, with the hope that in this way, progress can be made towards the goal of more equitable participation of men and women at decision-making levels in media organisations.

Beirut, Lebanon February 25, 1978

Keynote Address
"Women in Christian Communication"

Doris E. Hess, United Methodist Church, New York

It is five years since church-related communicators wrote a new constitution for an organization that brought together two world-renowned agencies, the Agency for Christian Literature Development (ACLD) and the former World Association for Christian Communication. They joined in 1975 to form the new WACC.

Since then the number of world women's movements has increased. For the first time women, equally with men, are being brought into dialogue on international communication. Organizations which, four years ago, could not come up with any findings at all on women in the media, now urge research and involvement of women in national communications' planning in all member states. In North America, Women in Communications Inc., a national secular group, showed dramatic gains in a membership which represents all media. Many women now have equal time and performance with men on the national television networks. The North American Broadcasting group, an affiliate of the WACC, has almost an equal number of women and men attending annual meetings.

Few women in WACC leadership

Yet the Central Committee of the present WACC, although providing for at least six women in a body of 50 representatives, has barely begun to involve women in its decision-making.

The former ACLD provided for five places for women on its 22-member board. At any one time, only three attended. The problem was not the lack of qualified women, but the churches from which women came more often preferred to send men to international councils whether or not they were in the media or had any relation to it.

The former WACC had several women attending its meetings, but only one took part in key decisions. It is a step forward that now each regional delegation must have one woman. But it has taken three of the new WACC's first four years for the Middle East and Latin America to appoint a woman delegate. The North American group, which by all rules should have the most vitality of women skilled in media, has chosen for three years to elect only one woman to the Central Committee. Two are elected to attend the 1978

meeting in Vancouver, but they are named only to fill one-year unexpired terms.

Both the ACLD and WACC, between 1970 and 1975, dealt primarily with men. Women attended many church-sponsored training courses but were never the decision-makers, nor even advanced to that role.

We can cite no Protestant woman as head of a large or centralized publishing house; we have no Christian women managing a Protestant radio operation or a training centre (notwithstanding Elizabeth Okwenje's special service recently as "acting director" of the Training Centre in Nairobi). Women in secondary roles, yes. Women in management? Well, it just isn't done.

Opportunity for Third World women in media

Contrast this with what Asian women found in their media research. They discovered that women are the majority group in nearly all training centres for communications in Asia today. The same is true in Brazil at the Communications Department of the Instituto Methodista de Ensino Superior in Rudge Ramos, Sao Paulo.

It is now common belief that women in media will get their best opportunity to be an equal part of society in the new nations of Africa. Yet women who attended the East Africa consultation in Kitwe last year are painfully aware that some of this is just promise, not fact. The barrier is that "you do not have enough training to manage a station or a top editorial post." If I understood the African women who attended the Kitwe conference, they are determined to become qualified. In fact, one of their colleagues from Nairobi is now taking broadcasting management courses at an American University. She is one of the many women previously turned down for advancement for "lack of qualifications."

Action must follow awareness

What can we do about all this? The leadership of WACC is taking the role of women in the media seriously, but awareness of the issue must be followed by action. Betty Thompson, one of the foremost women among church-related communicators in the United States, pointed out that the goals of women in Christian communication are those that help them make the contributions of which they are capable. That includes, she says, "any position now held by a man."

This and other goals imply meeting the qualifications for professional roles in communications. I believe this is in process, but it needs additional emphasis and funding. A distinctive attribute of future training must be to prepare women management level jobs.

Goals will also include insuring full treatment in the media of women's particular role in today's world. This first calls for her

advancement as a person. Guidelines are required which are practical, down-to-earth, and immediately applicable.

I want to share with you some of the goals of a large women's organization in the United States - because these goals come from genuine confrontation and hard work by women to help women help themselves.

First, these women (United Methodist) believe that the Church is still in captivity to male values, structures and practices and consequently cannot be a place of genuine community. They believe this to be true for all racial groups and in all countries, and women must be made conscious of the reasons for this captivity so they may examine, challenge and bring about change.

Margaret Mead, the anthropologist, told the World Health Organisation in the early 1970s that "every time we liberate a woman, we liberate a man" and these church women also feel that liberation for men as well as women and children can come only through rigorous analysis of assumptions in society.

This liberation (often a word people do not like to use or to hear) means a liberation by a movement of peoples which is the only means of bringing wholeness to the church. It is an imperative of the Gospel,and where it is in evidence, it is the working of the Holy Spirit.

Moving beyond mere tokenism

For church women this movement means moving beyond mere tokenism to empowerment and advocacy; by dealing with the dynamics of women's oppression; by informing and educating and raising the consciousness of women to social, economic and political realities; by offering support for women in transition; and by helping them create new visions of possible and desirable futures.

For WACC and related agencies to move women ahead in the communications world, specifically in and near the church communities,will require new programming - with priority to the best of training and experience available. It will require new efforts by and for women in programming, not as an addition to what is going on now nor by incorporation into any special media unit, but as new and challenging media involvements that women themselves can create. It will ask of us sacrifice in personnel and finances. And it will call for research and documentation showing the reality of discrimination and oppression in the media, and indicating that, whether formalized or not, the movement of women in training in communications is now nearly equal to or higher than that of men in most areas of the world.

This action must be co-ordinated with advocacy, and backed by excellent resources and research to bring about a new climate of inter-action between men and women. With such a new climate the

WACC, the World YWCA and the WCC Women's Programme can have a tremendous impact. In such a climate growth is possible.

I can think of no better way to say "let's move forward together into action" than with some words of Margaret Mead, a woman who has gone through the birth pangs, adolescence and adulthood of being a woman in a man's world, and made it!

She says: "Now, as never before, we need the imagination, the dedication, the creativity of everyone, to get society through the massive transformation in values and institutions required for an interdependent, diversified, mutually respecting and supportive planetary society. Human-kind has never had such a challenge before.

"Every historical feminine and masculine insight must be combined in one complementary global effort, to make this planet a safe home for our children and our children's children."

"Women in Ecumenical Communication Work"

Betty Thompson, United Methodist Church, New York

Women have long been the centre of the communications network of the churches, but have had little to do with official communications of the churches. A frequently cited reference is the women at the tomb. Just as frequently the reason given for male priesthood is the fact that there were no women among the twelve disciples. In more than two decades of involvement with ecumenical communications, I have observed that men still "man" — and that is the correct word — the principal offices of global and national communications related to the church. I would not attempt to define Christian communication, but who would have such arrogance? I will, however, refer to my experience with church-related communications.

From the vantage point of Geneva in the mid-1950s to a globally-related mission board today, my observation is that the gains by women in communications are very slight. For many years women were relegated to backroom jobs of writing the news releases or copy-editing the magazines while men held the titles and the places of authority. Let me begin with my own experience. I was first employed by a mission board that had separate communications activities for its women's groups and for the "total church." Women had their own magazines and editorial activities, but the news operation belonged in a unit where all the chief offices were held by men and there was no chance that a woman would ever advance. I myself was told I could not be promoted because I was not a man. It

was as blunt as that and as simple. It was fine to write news releases and filmstrips, to edit material, but I would not aspire to head the office or even be an associate.

Pioneering in the WACC

When I went to the World Council of Churches (WCC) to the then Information Office, I found that European male dominance was even more pronounced than American. In the whole of the Council there were only four or five women. Fortunately the information office was headed by a liberated Australian, who had no hesitancy about hiring a woman as information officer. That particular job became slotted for a woman and I was succeeded by three women. But no woman ever became head of the Communications Department nor did any woman head any other sub-unit of communication until the recent appointment of a woman for radio and television. As the drawers of water and the hewers of releases, women have served as back-up in many information offices. Currently the National Council of Churches in the USA is headed by a woman but here, too, the Communications Commission and the Information Office have traditionally been and currently are headed by men with women as press officers or assistant press officers.

Nor are the denominations any different, as I have found by serving on the communications committee of the National Council of Churches (NCC) in the USA and World Council of Churches. No denomination has a woman as chief communications officer. Yet journalism is a field in which there are many well-educated and trained women.

Women head the religious broadcasting departments of two major television networks in America. This may say more about what the networks think about religion than what they think about women. New magazines have male religion editors and, of the top papers in the country, a few have women religion editors. Marjorie Hyer is religion editor of the prestigious *Washington Post* in the USA and a number of smaller dailies have women editors. In the latter case, it may be that "religion" is slotted as women's work. The wire services have male religion editors and columnists, as do the news magazines. The same picture is reflected across the total religious communications community. Where women have power, it is often because the pay is low for a regional journal or because it is for a women's market. A study of the directories of the Associated Church Press and the Religious Public Relations Council in the USA will show that few women are chief editors of magazines, unless they have all-women audiences, or head communications offices. With the various affirmative action moves by government and, to a lesser degree, by the churches, is the situation getting any better? There is a more conscious search for minorities and women in the USA.

As one who was first in many respects — the first woman to be an editor-at-large of the *Christian Century*, first to serve on the communications committee of the WCC (and only in both cases for a short time), first to chair the News and Information committee of the NCC, I would be willing to hazard from my experience in the World Council and in operating press rooms around the world, that I do not come from a "backward" country in this respect. Although African women have held some key posts in secular journalism, and there have been some pioneer women communicators in Asia, on the whole the church lags behind the secular world on every continent.

Women in Christian communications - few and far between

From what I know of Europe and Britain, the women in Christian communications are few and far between. On the whole, the picture is not getting noticeably better. The WACC, NCC, regional councils of churches, and member churches still have basically sexist communications structures. Of the sponsors of this event, only the YWCA significantly has women in top places. What this primarily says is not just that the church is a male-dominated institution, which we all know anyway, but that the community of women which has traditionally supported the church, nourished new generations of believers, educated and supported its mission endeavours, are vastly under-represented in the face the church presents to the world. There are an increasing number of Roman Catholic orders which have produced women skilled in communications, but if we look at the Roman Catholic picture it is on the whole even worse.

Betty Thompson, Associate General Secretary, Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church, USA was not able to be in Beirut, but her "mini speech" was read by Doris Hess.

World Reports
from Sweden

Monica Boethius, Sveriges Lokalradio

In Sweden women have been in the media, professionally, for just over a hundred years. My own job is in local radio. Most of my professional life has been in local radio, for I came into it as a producer in 1961 and have stayed ever since. Before that I edited and wrote for women's magazines.

Radio in Sweden is similar to the BBC in structure. It is a state monopoly divided into subsidiary companies, which are autonomous but within the larger framework, under the same laws, regulations and conditions. I am deputy director of a company made up of 24 different regional stations spread throughout the country. These are small stations, each with a staff of 20 to 25. They broadcast a couple of hours every day. I am responsible for programme administration and policy for the whole company, and I am the only woman in such a high executive media position in Sweden. There are quite a few women editors, of course, mostly in women's magazines. There are no women's pages in newspapers any longer, but there are women who head departments of newspapers, and in radio too. But there is no woman media executive in Sweden more highly paid than I am. That shows what an underdeveloped country I am describing.

Since my country has had such a long history of women in the media, let me tell you about some of the traps we have fallen into.

The first was the trap of being allowed into the media but only on certain conditions. It was as if the men said, "We will let you work in this field as long as you stay where we, the decision-makers, think you are fitted to work." This meant that women were kept within the strict confines of what was seen as "women's work." They wrote about cooking, fashion and society weddings. Women were not supposed to be interested in anything else and it was assumed that only women read what women wrote.

Treating women's questions seriously

At the same time, we did have the type of magazine which treated women's questions in a more serious way. They were small and humble publications, but they dealt with issues such as the women's vote; war and peace, which has been a women's concern in my country for at least a century; and obstacles women encountered in certain professions. The first of these papers appeared in 1848, I believe. It is difficult to know what effect they had, because they were read by only a few women and in very small circles, but they did

provide an opportunity for women who did not want to write about fashion or cooking to do some serious journalism. They were run by women, although there was usually a man at the head, to give it "dignity."

Finally, when women rebelled against the conditions forced on them in the media, they fell headlong into the next trap. This was even more devastating than the first. It went like this. We, the women, will show them, the men, that we are as good or better than they are, and we will fight them with their own weapons. In Sweden, this was the marching song for women journalists in the 1920s. They were highly-trained, highly-qualified and very strong. They fought their way to the news desks, into current affairs and crime reporting. One even became a war journalist who covered the Spanish Civil War in the mid-thirties. At that time she was the only woman war reporter, and I think she still is the only one in Sweden. She went to Germany when World War II started and also covered the winter war in Finland. She became a very well-known woman in Sweden and she and her contemporaries, though they were few, were admired as examples to be followed by the younger journalists. We followed them into the same trap.

I remember discussing this when I was a young journalist. This is madness, we said. What we are doing is giving up our private lives, our own ideas and goals. But the older ones remained militant. We have to show them, they said. And they succeeded. They proved they were just as capable as the men. Needless to say they were all childless and without family obligations. Otherwise it would not have been possible. Those with family responsibilities went out of the game.

New Women's Movement begins

This trap was really shown for what it was at the end of the 1950s. In 1961, an article was written in Sweden which launched a discussion which still continues. This is the New Women's Movement, more militant, more active than the earlier ones, but with a different content. The article, "Free on Probation," pointed out that women had been let into the male professional world providing that, at the same time, they continued to carry the whole responsibility for family, child-bearing and household management. The great question pinpointed by the article was, "Do women have to accept values and conditions set by viewpoints other than their own?"

This brings me to today. The main question today is not "to be allowed into the media." The question is what you do when you get there. This has been a very important question for me and, having reached my present position, I felt very strongly that I had to do something. Before this I was head of planning within Swedish programming and that also was a completely male-dominated world

with male ideas of what to do and how to do it. What has been important for me has been being able to ask myself how things should be done, and to bring my own experience and ideas to the job. It is not that women are different as human beings, but they bring a different experience which has not been reflected or used in the professional world, certainly not in the media. Whatever field they work in, women communicators today must try to see that their values are considered, and considered as important as what is now rated so highly by the media — crime, war, technology, economy, politics.

Little progress so far

We, in Sweden, have been working on this question seriously. But I cannot say we have progressed very far yet. Why? Let me tell you a story from my own field of local radio. We have what is called Access Radio, where people can come and do their own programme about whatever interests them with the radio station providing the necessary technological help. A group which has taken advantage of this is the Campaign for Breast Feeding, started by a few young mothers concerned that breast feeding in our over-civilised country is disappearing in favour of bottle-feeding. They are working with groups all over the country and made an Access Radio programme in a small town in western Sweden. The bright young journalist who announced them said: "And now we will have a programme about something unusual as breast feeding." Considering that half the world is breast feeding and the others are breast fed, this seemed to me a sensational way of putting it. It showed me how barren the media world is when it comes to the truly important things. They have been allowed in. We have never pushed hard enough for them. So, what can be done about this? There is no easy answer and history shows us these changes do not happen overnight.

Everywhere in the world today the media are male-dominated. This is more so when you get to the more powerful positions. The decision-makers are almost all men, and all they do is governed by male values. In a way, this gives a picture of the real world, which is also full of male values so it becomes a sort of fortress which is very difficult to attack.

Some experiments for equality in the media

In Sweden we are beginning some experiments, which may have an effect in years to come. We don't yet know. One is the establishment of a committee for equality between men and women in the media. There is such a committee in the National Radio and TV Network, and others within the big newspapers. One of the ways of working for equality is to have a quota for recruiting. I used to be against this as I felt it was bad for a woman to be appointed just because she is a woman. If you think about it, however, there are many men who are appointed on the same basis, with no qualifica-

17

tion other than that they are men. But now, having seen the slow and frustrating developments over the last 30 years, I have come to the point where I really support the quota idea at least as a first step. At the same time the committee is also trying to change the image of women within the media, and this can't be done without education. Education is very important, and the Swedish Broadcasting Company now has special training courses for women who want to work as producers, commentators and so on. Here too it is possible to work on a quota system. But there are some jobs such as in the secretarial field where it doesn't help at all.

We may say we have a quota, and give positive discrimination towards men applying for secretarial jobs, but men don't apply. So in this case you have to change the structure of the job. As it is now, secretarial jobs are just housewife chores moved into the business world. The job is formed by the man. The secretary has *his* calendar, answers *his* phone, writes *his* letters. It is no different from cooking his food and washing his shirts. Men don't apply for that kind of job.

Educating staff in local radio

In local radio, we started from scratch, recruiting people and educating them. We let them buy their own office furniture, choose their own curtains, organise their own jobs. We got the group together to decide who should do what, right down to the simplest things like washing up after coffee, emptying wastepaper baskets and filling out forms. And as all these jobs were being allocated it suddenly hit the men that they couldn't go on saying all the time "Nancy will do that, she's the secretary." So they started dividing everything between them. It is really no more difficult for a man to do these things than it is for him to get himself up in the morning and dress himself. So there were no longer any secretaries in Swedish radio. None at all. Of course they had to have people who could write letters and send them out looking neat and legible. We recruited people who could do this. But there are no secretaries as such, and those who applied for secretarial posts are now doing much more qualified jobs. In many cases they are producing programmes. They have good experience and good ideas, and we have tried to integrate the whole group so they can also manage the technology. Women feel they are not very good at technology, but I tell them if they can operate a washing machine or a modern stove, they can certainly cope with the technical side of radio programmes.

Now there is a great interchange of people from one job to another. We have no news desk, for example, and men and women alike take part in evaluating news events and working with them. I hope this will last, but the experiment has been going less than a year, so it is too early to say. Sweden is a small country. Experiments are noticed and can have an effect.

from the Arab World, number one

Rose Ghunayyib, Beirut Institute for Women

I am a teacher and the experience I have comes from my work with the Institute of Women's Studies in the Arab World at the Beirut University College. The main medium of communication used by Arab women is journalism, because radio and television are in the elementary stages in these countries and women's part in them is mostly limited to simple programmes for other women or for children.

Women have been in journalism a long time. During the early part of this century, they became interested in social activities and many founded women's magazines. Historians count about 40 such magazines which appeared in Lebanon, Egypt and Syria during the first 50 years, but they did not survive for long. They were interested in women's rights, such as the right to education, and they talked about the need for amendment to family laws, such as the abolition of polygamy and an equal right to inheritance for women. They also wanted the abolition of the veil, but even now few countries have legally abolished this. Where the veil has disappeared, it has done so in a natural manner not by law. The family laws affecting women have hardly changed, and there has been no fundamental amendment giving women equal inheritance rights, except in the Christian community in Tunisia where this was done in 1958.

Between 1950 and 1970, there were very few women's magazines and they tried to satisfy all tastes, publishing material about beauty problems, housekeeping and child-care, as well as pressing for social reform in general, education, family and child welfare, family status and so on. In countries with a Muslim majority, women were perhaps more active, demanding the abolition of polygamy, and restriction of divorce, as well as equality for women in inheritance. But in Lebanon, because of the various communities, each with its own family laws, activities like this have been restricted.

Recently, there has been a League of Women's Rights which has been asking for complete equality in politics, inheritance and in the family, but it has been accused of leftist tendencies and its influence has not been great.

Women in journalism today cannot be very influential because the papers are male-dominated, and they must follow the policy of their papers which is generally traditional. Of course there are some men whose attitude towards women is progressive, but not many. Lately, one of the deputies acclaimed equality of men and women before the law, the abolition of certain restrictions such as refusing to accept a woman's signature in financial transactions, or preventing women from leaving the country without their husband's permission. Another deputy claimed the abolition of the penal law

regarding "honour crimes" which allows alleviating circumstances if a man kills his wife to save his honour, and jails him for a minimal time. But so far, such reforms are in theory only. No actual change has been made.

Women in Lebanon today have access to education and to work without restriction, but as in other countries most of them still occupy low positions. They are usually found in the teaching profession, secretarial positions or factory work, and have no important influence in court or in government.

We do not have a strong, united women's organisation to initiate and to follow up women's claims and needs. There is not enough unity in the country itself to help women act and be active. The different communities are a handicap, for when one sect works for a certain reform, others may work against it just for the sake of opposing. Perhaps there is more activity in Egypt. Certainly there is in Tunisia where the ruler is a progressive person who has favoured women's rights. Lately I have read that initial reform has been made also in family laws in Syria and Jordan, restricting man's right both to polygamy and divorce.

There continue to be many women journalists in Lebanon today, but they do not have the influence they once had. I do not believe that now there is a single magazine edited by a woman.

from the Arab World, number two

Emily Waseallah, journalist and novelist, Beirut

When I came to Beirut in the early 1950s, there was a magazine called *The Voice of Woman*. Edited by a woman, it was a traditional magazine catering for women and publishing articles about issues important to them. It was a monthly, and so could not be as influential as a weekly or a daily paper, but it did a good job and served the cause of women as much as its means would allow. I came into journalism by chance. I left my village in south Lebanon to go to university, and had to earn some money to support myself. So I wrote some articles for *The Voice of Woman* and then found a part-time job with a weekly political magazine.

Here I felt I entered the real world of journalism where there was competition with men. I was a student with no experience, so I didn't have much chance to choose and I wrote whatever they asked me to write. This included advice to teenagers, translations, women's articles, cultural articles, and even for a short time, some political articles. For quite a while I was the only woman among 30 men, and I had to prove myself. I had to show that I could do the job as well as they could. In the beginning the competition was very strong. I was very serious, and the editor appreciated this, so in time, I had two or three pages which I edited myself and a column

in which I could write what I wanted on cultural, educational or women's topics. No politics was included because my part of the magazine was not the political section.

Using women to boost circulation

In four or five years, more women came in. They wrote about social events, fashion, how to bring up your child. Even political magazines have women's sections. But I have to admit that many of these women are not serious and made it more difficult for the ones who came after them. Women's magazines now have men at the head of them. They provide articles for people who just want to be entertained and do not care for serious issues. I have discovered that men who work in the media have their own philosophy about women. They believe we can write articles which will attract attention and please other women. "You should make women read," they tell us. But read what? Social news and fashion items? Just superficial things? They say once you get women to read, you will sell your magazine, so they are using us to sell their magazine for them. In the sixties, more women came into journalism, and then with TV and radio there were jobs available there too. But it is not quantity that makes progress. It is quality, and few of these women were given the chance to perform on a high level. Many of the women working in the media now are simply working for a salary and do not feel as the pioneers did that they have a mission. If they raise an issue, it comes about by chance, not with the enthusiasm and dedication of the pioneers.

I am speaking about the period before the war, of course. We lived in Lebanon as well as in the Arab world, and there was continuous upheaval. We didn't have the harmonious living which allows for progress, but were interrupted by wars, by revolution, by all the problems of the Middle East, which affected the progress of women in journalism and in the media generally, as it affected the progress of all people in this area. Nowadays we are completely at a standstill. As writers and journalists we are standing in our places wondering what to do next. Some of us are not working at all. The worst thing for a writer is to put censorship over his head and say now write what I tell you. But we hope that this will not always be so, but that things will soon be normal again, and that once more there will be serious women working in the media.

from the Arab World, number three

Leila Shaheen da Cruz, Illustrated Publications, Beirut

Women are not permitted to work in all media. It is a shocking fact that, within the area we call the Arab world, there is the extreme view which does not allow women to be seen on television or their voices to be heard on radio. If I am not mistaken, this is still the case

in Saudi Arabia, which is a country where women are still veiled. They are not allowed to drive cars, they do not appear in the streets, they are completely in the background. In these circumstances, for a woman to appear on television would be shocking.

It is interesting however that in these communities women can be extremely powerful and they very often control money and make decisions. What I am talking about is the public image of women, which is completely non-existent. So much of our way of life in Arab countries is dictated by religion. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, the law of Lebanon was Turkish law. When the French mandate began after the first World War, French law, instead of replacing Ottoman law, was simply incorporated into it. On top of that came the local Lebanese law. So in all this there is a great deal of Moslem influence, despite the fact that so much of the country is Christian.

Personal laws, family laws, have remained within the jurisdiction of the different religious sects and this has been a great factor in deterring progress, certainly as far as women are concerned.

I am one of those who does have a top job, however, and therefore my experience gives a slightly different dimension to what we are talking about. I am editor-in-chief and general manager of a small publishing house, in which I have full responsibility. My president is one of those people who, once confidence is established, does not interfere. But establishing confidence is a slow process. With the background of the Arab world as you have now heard it, you can imagine how much resistance there was to my taking over, and how many people tried to "blacken my face" as we say in my language. I was not given the job because I was a capable woman. I just happened to be there, and they saw me as a possibility.

This was a publishing house for children's books, leisure-time material in Arabic, and I was doing some translation for them. They needed someone to take over the administration and there was no one else at that moment. My situation wasn't very easy, for I had small children to care for, but it was a challenge and I accepted the position. One thing I learned very early. If you come into a job at a man's level, then you must perform like a man, despite all the problems you have and he hasn't. You must continue to cope with the child who's sick, the food that's burning on the stove, the husband whose shirts need ironing.

In the first place I had a bunch of men always looking over my shoulder nervously wondering whether I really was the right person for the job. And there were many who just waited for me to make a mistake, and when that didn't happen were eager to misinterpret what I did. Luckily I am a person who believes in the written word and keeping the files very organised, so I was always able to back up what I was doing with facts. Now I sit on two Boards of Directors of companies in which we are shareholders, and I have gained confidence. As other women in my position have found, when you speak

at a meeting, the man who speaks after you completely ignores what you have said and goes back to an earlier point. But you learn to be persistent, and say "I think you are forgetting the suggestions I have just made." Or you ask that your point be recorded in the minutes.

Because we do public relations work and also have media representation for various American magazines, I often go to the Gulf countries. I made my first trip with great trepidation. When I, a woman, walk into a man's office in these countries, I can feel the resistance. When I go into the Public Works Department, for example, and I am talking to a man about an airport project, I can see the incredulity in his eyes. It is not easy to build confidence so that he knows that yes, you do know what you are talking about, and yes, you are as efficient as he is and probably more persistent in follow-up. But it's a slow process, and my advice to women who want to get to this level is to do it slowly and calmly. Make sure there are no mistakes. Men can be the most inefficient people themselves, but when it comes to a woman in the business world, they can be very, very harsh in their judgments.

from Asia on group communication

Violet Coomarasamy, YWCA, Malaysia

Once there was a tree and it loved a little child. Every day the child would gather leaves from the tree, make them into crowns and play "queen of the forest." The child would climb up the tree, swing from its branches and eat apples. They would play hide-and-go-seek. When the child was tired, she would sleep in the tree's shade. The child loved the tree very much, and the tree was happy. Time went on. The child grew older and the tree was often alone.

Then one day, the child came to the tree and the tree said, "Come child, come and climb up my trunk and swing from my branches, and eat apples and play in my shade and be happy."

"I'm too big to climb and play," said the child. "I want to buy things and have fun. I want some money. Can you give me some money?"

"I'm sorry" said the tree, "but I have no money. I have only leaves and apples. Take my apples, child, and sell them in the city. Then you will have money, and you will be happy."

So the child climbed up the tree and gathered the apples and carried them away. The tree was happy. But the child stayed away for a long time and the tree was sad. Then one day the child came back. The tree shook with joy and said "Come child, climb up my trunk and swing from my branches and be happy."

"I'm too busy to climb trees," said the child. "I want a house to

keep me warm. I want to be married and I want children and so I need a house. Can you give me a house?"

"I have no house," said the tree. "The forest is my house. But you may cut off my branches and build a house. Then you will be happy."

So the child cut off the tree's branches and carried them away to build her house. The tree was happy again. But the child stayed away for a long time. And when the child came back the tree was so happy it could hardly speak. "Come child" it whispered, "Come and play."

"I'm too old and sad to play," said the child. "I want a boat that will take me far away from here. Can you give me a boat?"

"Cut down my trunk and make boat," said the tree. "Then you will sail away and be happy."

So the child cut down the tree and made a boat and sailed away. And the tree was happy, but not really. After a long, long time the child came back again.

"I'm sorry child" said the tree, "but I have nothing left to give you. My apples are gone."

"My teeth are too weak for apples," said the child.

"My branches are gone too," said the tree. "You cannot swing from them."

"I'm too old to swing on branches," said the child.

"My trunk is gone," said the tree. "You cannot climb".

"I'm too tired to climb," said the child.

"I am sorry," sighed the tree. "I wish that I could give you something but I have nothing left. I'm just an old stump. I am sorry."

"I don't need very much now," said the child. "Just a quiet place to sit and rest. I'm very tired."

"Well," said the tree, straightening up as much as it could. "An old stump is good for sitting and resting. Come child, sit down. Sit down and rest." And the girl did. And the tree was happy.

The giving tree is a parable of response to changing needs. This is what we in the YWCA see as our purpose and meaning: to be able to respond to a need as it arises. During this consultation I have been thinking of the different ways in which we in the YWCA seek to respond to needs that may be expressed or are sometimes not expressed. I think back to our Asian regional meeting, held in Bangkok, where we tried to bring together the riches that are part of our traditional cultures in order to share them. We want to use our cultures in a world where, even though we are able to read and more people are learning to read, less and less people are reading.

We also recognise that, even though it is glibly said in my part of the world that women are illiterate, there are many Asian countries where the literacy rate is very high. However, we recognise that the written word is perhaps losing its importance, because, in spite of

being able to read, we are not reading. The YWCA in Asia is trying, struggling to see how it can communicate.

Story telling, something that our mothers and grandmothers used to do, is one important way. Today we tried to tell a story and show how, as the story is unfolded, the responses came in mime and in picture. We recognise the simplicity of some of these traditional ways. Women have been in traditional folk media for centuries in my part of the world.

Women in Hindu classical dance

Worship, according to Hindu tradition, was in the hands of women who were professionally trained from childhood to dance the Barda Natum. This is the classical dance of India which originated, according to Hindu understanding, with God himself when he created the world in the cosmic dance. He is worshipped by the Hindus as Nada Rajah, the God of the Dance. I know that in Christian society dancing has, at times, been considered a sin. In the Hindu tradition, dancing has been one of the best ways of worshipping God. Through the ages women were chosen to be Dancer to the Gods, Derva Adial. They were selected for their background, breeding, intelligence, beauty, ability, *and* their piety. The term Derva Adial later became degraded and was equated with the word prostitute. But within the last 25 years Hindu society in India has tried to rediscover the true meaning of the role and function of the Derva Adial, the Dancer to the Gods, in interpreting the meaning of worship of God through dance.

Folk media uses hands, the body, the eyes, in different ways. I was very interested to learn that in the United States, which is talking so much about satellite communication, people are also discovering body language, a "new" medium of communication. I quote from the Caribbean consultation:

"The irony is that with the control of the mass media in metropolitan centres, and the power attendant on such control, the very original sources are fed back their own stuff as if they were invented in those centres."

This is a quotation from *The Performing Arts in Jamaica*. I am waiting for the day, which I suspect will come soon, that we will get back into Asia what we have known for centuries — body language. No doubt it will be fed to us as something original.

Traditional culture as media

The YWCA has always worked on the basis that we are an adult education movement. This means education from the womb to the tomb. A priority is non-formal education. We have been trying to see how we can then carry non-formal education out in the Asian

context using means within our own cultures. When you think of the lullabies that mothers sing to their children, they have meaning. They are also conditioning the child to concepts and attitudes.

When we look at a wedding ceremony this too is a medium by which we enable people to communicate. May I share with you a custom in Asian marriages of tradition. The bride and the bridegroom perhaps meet together for the very first time at their marriage ceremony. To enable them to communicate later in a relationship, which is a very intimate one, they bring a brass vessel full of water and drop in a ring. The bride and bridegroom are supposed to try and get the ring. The woman usually allows the man to take the ring but in the process there is body language. The hands are at play.

We have been accused many times of not saying thank you very readily. Our thank you is a bow which means "I bow to the divine in you." We use our bodies and our hands to express our feelings, not words. In the Asian pattern non-verbal communication is important. The Moslem form of greeting is to put hands together and to bring them up in front of you. Depending on your age and status, you either bring them higher or lower. We have then already expressed, in this one movement, the status, position and the kind of respect paid to another person.

You heard the drums. We have talking drums too which give out many kinds of messages. The YWCA of Korea has drums which can thrill you, catch you in a mood that is exhilarating or they can quieten you down.

Mime and shadow play in Malaysia

We also have different kinds of mime. One is, in the Malaysian concept, called silat, which is the Art of Self-Defence. It does *not* mean the Art of Attack. It means self-defence and it is one of the most graceful dances which two people perform. The Chinese version of it is shadow boxing, Tai-ki-kun. If you go to the museum in Kuala Lumpur, you will be exposed to the riches of shadow play, called wayang kulit. Figures which illustrate the stories that you are going to tell are cut from pieces of leather. In Athens I bought some postcards which showed cut-out leather figures, called karadios. In Malaysia they are called wayang kulit, meaning "play leather" shadow play. This medium is used in India, Burma, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and China.

While we have the medium of shadow play in common, it is interesting to see how those figures change shape according to the local environment. The shadow play has been used as a medium to communicate concepts about planned parenthood in Indonesia. We in Malaysia have come to recognise young people having been exposed to pop culture, are not as interested in the wayang kuling or the shadow play. The government is trying to find ways to use this art,

to update it so that it is relevant for the modern young in Malaysia.

Have you seen a Chinese opera? For special occasions such as someone's 61st birthday (before you are 60, you are non-important in the Chinese culture), a temporary stage is set up outside the home. Here the opera is performed.

Street theatre in India

In India, as well as in the other countries of Asia, there is street theatre where people gather like the ancient troubadors and minstrels to re-enact stories and plays. Many of the things that women and men learn come from street dramas at weekly markets. They are used to sell products, give a message or simply to entertain. There is always dialogue because, in the Asian setting, response from the audience comes in terms of garlanding the person or making the right kind of noises of appreciation.

In Fiji I was at a village feast where I saw magnificent dancing. I was one of those so moved by the dancing that I forgot my inhibitions, jumped up and put a garland round one of the male dancers because he danced so well. I didn't carry it to the next stage however. I was supposed to have kissed him.

There are dance-dramas which tell of the triumph of evil over good. These are held during the festival of light, when the lights are lit to symbolise that back in the history of the Hindu-based traditional communities, there had been a wicked king who ground the people under his heel. God himself sent his messenger who overcame the wicked king in battle. This messenger had the grace when he was dying to say "Celebrate my death." So they celebrate with dance-dramas.

Masked dancers from Korea

Have you seen masked dancers in the Asian setting? At our Asian regional meeting, The YWCA of Korea brought masks to depict different characters and went through dance sequences. The use of a mask is part of the culture in all the countries of Asia. The Kathakali dance of India, the Kandian dance of Ceylon, the Ramayana dance of Thailand, the Mayong dance-drama of Malaysia use masks which help free people from inhibitions. Perhaps the YWCA in Asia is trying to find traditional media which will help free women to express themselves, their concerns and their needs.

Together with all these media we also have group discussions, one of the most valuable ways the YWCA has found to encourage women to talk. I have seen participants with a non-Western pattern of thinking who, because they are with people from another tradition, hold themselves back and do not begin talking immediately.

Perhaps we need to recognise that, in many Asian cultures, women do not readily speak. They need help to express themselves. It seems to me that when you are talking about Christian communi-

cation we have to understand this basic truth. There are women who, because of the pattern in their society, do not speak in words but express themselves in other ways. I stressed this morning that I noticed that Third World women at this consultation were not speaking. We need to find out why and to discover what they were saying through their silence.

Women urged to speak for themselves

I must share with you some of the things that happen in small group discussions. At a dinner to which I had been invited in a small town in Pakistan a group of YWCA women were there with their husbands. When we introduced ourselves one of the husbands took it upon himself to speak on behalf of the YWCA. He wanted to tell how much the World YWCA was supporting certain projects There is a lesson here and the World YWCA has recognised it. We cannot enable women to speak freely if they are in a mixed group of women and men. When we are organising consultations we need to bring the kind of women, like me, who will look a man straight in the face and say "I do not agree." To do this is not part of Asian culture.

I am an untraditional Asian woman. Maybe the YWCA has encouraged me to use verbal communication. There is also something I think has happened to me and this may be what my Christian religion has done for me. It has alienated me from my roots. And I need to be helped to find my roots again. And maybe this is something that Christian communication needs to put into its consideration. Do we alienate people from all that has gone into their making in their traditions and their culture for centuries past or do we make them into Christians — a shiftless, rootless group of people, unable to find themselves secure, strengthened and supported? When I introduced myself I said "I don't need to go and find ways for dialogue with people of other religions." — in my case the people of the Hindu religion. Because within me is already built in the dialogue that has been taking place for centuries before. I need now to be helped to share that with those of you who come from traditions that have not had this kind of richness.

Dialogue among women of different faiths

May I pinpoint a couple more things. One, that because of the use of various media and the emphasis on small group discussions the YWCA in Malaysia has dialogue with women of different faiths. We can relate to them, the World YWCA and its Week of Prayer themes. They are people like us. In the Malaysian context if I were to talk of people like us and only confined it to Christians, I'm afraid I'd relate only to a miserable minority. But if I talk of people like us and relate it to the whole of the population, in terms of people of different

religions, then we are talking with one another and drawing on the richness of our culture.

We have used the egg, talking of folk media, to bring together women of different religious traditions. We have helped them to think about the calorific value of the egg. When the price of eggs went down because of a glut in the market, we moved them into recognising that we are caught up in something called international economic order. How did we bring this egg in the picture? We related it to Easter. There was a woman of Yugoslav background who brought a painted egg. We had a Malay woman who brought in an egg from a traditional Malay wedding where a beautifully painted egg is handed to each guest. The egg means "May you have many more children." And so what does it mean in terms of "Let's not have too many children?" In Chinese tradition when a son has reached the age of one moon which is 30 days, the proud grandparents throw a dinner. They give each guest a red egg, Hongkai-tun, to express joy at the birth of that son. We have used that to enable women to express their feelings of being exploited by a custom which expresses joy when a son is born, and despair when girls are born.

Rediscovering richness and dignity

Let me mention WACC. I look at this brochure where you talk about using funds to enable Third World countries to develop communications techniques. I wonder whether WACC might also consider how it could help people in my part of the world to rediscover and regain the dignity of the preciousness of the media that they have, instead of bombarding us with the fact that television and radio and satellite communication are the most important. What we need so very much is to be able to talk with one another. Husband and wife sense this under the pressures of modern society where women have to cope with more than ever and must deal with so many choices while men are becoming more alienated from home life because there is so much demand on his professional life. Children, because of their experiences and the exposures to which they are subjected, find it difficult to communicate with their parents. Because of status and position, age and rank, social, economic and educational differences, we are finding ourselves unable to communicate.

I would like to see WACC not put money into projects but rather find ways to help people rediscover within themselves the richness and the dignity of their own methods of communication. They should not feel ground under the heel because they do not have the best radio stations, nor the best TV, nor the chance to jump into the satellite communication arena.

To end, I'd like to share with you this international symbol of women. All of us know it. Yet, when the women and the men in

Malaysia were called together to plan the celebration of International Women's Year, a group of Muslim women said, "We do not want this symbol which glorifies the cross."

May I also share with you these words by a Muslim poet from Malaysia. He's a man, but men too speak. He said:

Do not say my people are lazy, because you do not know.
You're only a critic, an onlooker.
You cannot know or judge, passing the kampong in your car,
Staring at economic data.

Do not think my people are weak, because we are gentle.
Because they do not build skyscrapers.
Have you ever worked in a la-dang?
Or danced the ronggeng?
Can you sing the dongdang sayang?

Do not think that we have only music because we love life.
Do not write that we have no literature, culture;
Have you listened to a sajak or a pantun?
Or stayed a night at the bangsawan?
Have you read the epic seers?
Or the theological theses?

How many times have you wondered about the history
In the blade, or ancestry in the hands of the kris?
Or felt the pattern of the songket?
Have you lived in a kampong?

Do not condemn us as poor, because we have very few banks.
See here the richness of our people: the brimful hot
That do not grab or grapple.
We collect humanity from sun and rain and man,
Transcending the business and the money.

Do not tell us how to live
Or organise such nice associations and bodies.
Our society was an entity before
The advent of political philosophy.
Do not say because you do not know.

from the Philippines, Caribbean & Africa

Women use small media in Philippine villages

Anne Walker of the International Women's Tribune Centre showed us a filmstrip, "Self Actualisation through Education", prepared by World Education, a U.S.-based organisation. This filmstrip, produced in the Philippines, tells how media help village women become self-sufficient. The leaders relied primarily on the Paulo Freire method to form groups. Then small media were used to help the women to determine what their problems were and to find solutions to these problems.

The flannelgraph, a long-standing visual aid used in Sunday schools, very effectively portrayed problems and solutions. A large bulletin board gave the women a chance to paste small markers against items on a list of problems and solutions. This bulletin board became an effective instrument in the process of identifying problems. The flexiflan was also used, as were pictures, in helping the women to pinpoint their needs and to clarify their goals. Nothing elaborate was used in this experiment. Simple media, which could be made by any extension officer and which would not cause serious problems of perception for villagers, were very effectively used in this process.

Creative use of media among Caribbean youth

Joyce Holder of the World YWCA, Caribbean Region, share the results of the Caribbean Consultation for Women held in 1975. She is a YWCA worker in Barbados who is trained in communications. In her work she uses communication skills for more effective learning, not forgetting that effective learning is learning by doing. In order to help young people understand about their community, Joyce, when leading a seminar, encourages young people to find out what is really happening in their community. The training that communicators receive in fact-finding and in team work is used in Joyce's seminars to help them see that these skills are important for other types of work and for personal development. Joyce also uses media and encourages the young people to use media and creative techniques in reporting the results which they find from surveying the community. A book of poems and prayers which were written by young girls has already been published. Seeing their names in print helps the young people to realise that they also have something important to contribute to the world. Young people are shown how to prepare posters in order to advertise themselves and their work. Photographs from gatherings are used to learn how to channel information. Slides are taken of different training opportunities to show to other groups so that they can see what is being done in various parts of the Caribbean.

Joyce Holder spends much of her time writing articles about what women are doing and about the specific needs of women. She has reported on a project for unemployed youth in Montserrat and has written about a young girl who started her own school. This usage of media promotes the interests of women and presents a positive image of the activities of women. A new feature syndicate on Caribbean women, which will prepare material about women for women and circulate it through the news agencies in the Caribbean, will also help combat the commercialised interest of women as consumers.

Media training for African women

In Africa, media work with women is largely centred around training. The WACC African Region identified training as one of its foremost needs. Since the Kitwe Consultation in Zambia in 1977, three women have been given scholarships to attend a course in journalism at the African Literature Centre in Kitwe. All three graduated with flying colours. One women is doing a post-graduate course in communications management at Boston University. The hope is that she will return and serve the church in a useful capacity.

Encouraging women to use their skills and talent requires considerable work. Many women are able to write articles, to produce radio programmes, to engage in communications activities which would be meaningful to society, but lack the courage to do so. Their writings are usually kept in their bedrooms or in desk drawers. If they get up enough courage to send articles to editors, the material often sits in the stack of material on the editor's desk waiting for a time when it can be used. This is a quick way to discourage the budding writer. Several writer workshops have been held in Nairobi to help women with editing and to give them new ideas and insights into ways of making their writing more publishable.

32

Closing Worship

Margaret Dunn, World YWCA, Geneva

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork.
Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.
There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.
Their line is gone out throughout all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.
The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul, the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.
The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.
The commandment of the Lord is pure enlightening the eyes.
Who can understand his own errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults.
Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins. Let them not have dominion over me, then shall I be upright, and innocent from the great transgression.
Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.

I have chosen these verses from Psalm 19 because they are about communications. At least I think they are about communications. Some certainly are, and others could well be. The line "going out throughout all the earth and their words to the end of the world" seems very like our modern satellite communications. And whereas we have said, a little hopelessly, that the media distorts facts and is irresponsible, the psalm points firmly in the right direction. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul, the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple".

The prayer to keep us from presumptuous sins also seems applicable. Presumption is a trap we communicators fall into all too easily. I hope, however, that you will not think me presumptuous if, on the last morning of our conference, I share with you some thoughts I have had on this subject of communications.

Some time ago, Hans Florin, WACC's general secretary, mentioned to me that he had been asked to write an article on how he saw Christian communication in the year 2000. I did not say it to him at the time, but I thought to myself, I don't suppose it will be very different from what it has already been — for it seems to me that the way we tell our story today is not so very far from the way it has always been told. Different tools of trade, perhaps, but you have to expect some differences over several thousand years.

God, the master communicator

Those of us in the media today go to some trouble to get our message across, so that it is clearly understood and so that we get the right audience reaction. But think of the detailed clarity of God's words to people like Noah and Solomon. Could any words of yours or mine — unsupported by chart or visual aids — cause to be built, with precision and success, a seaworthy vessel capable of housing such an unlikely crew as Noah's ark, or a temple which was the wonder of the whole world, as was Solomon's?

Or think of Christ's interpretation of the law — Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength — and thy neighbour as thyself. It really leaves us in no doubt as to what we should be doing even if, unlike Noah and Solomon, we do not always do it.

We say we must make our communications understandable to all — village woman and city dweller alike. Has it ever struck you that the Christmas story is just such a communication? The mystery and wonder of God's gift, of his only-begotten son, is almost beyond our human comprehension. But the familiar, everyday, tender miracle of birth is not. The baby in the manger touches all hearts, reaches out to all people. As it always has.

Making the Word live

We talk about the necessity of catching the attention of our audience before actually producing our message — the startling headline, the intriguing picture — Ethel Bwanausi's drumming with which Violet Coomarasamy started her session on Wednesday. Do you remember the story of the burning bush? The verse in Exodus 3 tells us that Moses said "I will now turn aside, and see this great sight; why the bush is not burnt. And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God spake."

WACC has a special section on what it calls Group Media. We talked about it with Violet on Wednesday. It includes the art of communicating by story-telling, stirring the thoughts and imaginations of people with simple stories in familiar settings, such as the parables through which Jesus told his Good News to the men and women of his time. And to us, of course, for how else could we have understood the deep truths — or even caught a glimmer of them — in his teachings if they had not been given to us in this way?

Then we have visual communications. Some of the most visual writing I know is in Revelation. And another piece I particularly like is in Isaiah, where he speaks of the haughty daughters of Zion who walked "with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go and making a tinkling with their feet." I like the picture of these women — with their "changeable suits of apparel, their mantles, their wimples and their crisping pins." If you want to

34

read the whole description, it is in Isaiah 3. And is there any bleaker or more forlorn sentence anywhere than the one which ends that chapter — "and she, being desolate, shall sit upon the ground."

Receiving and listening

If we want audio, as well as visual communications, then the Bible can give us that too. Has anyone ever used music to better effect than Joshua? His trumpets literally brought down the walls. And David, after his great triumph over the Philistines, was welcomed by the women who came out of all the cities of Israel singing and dancing, and they answered each other, back and forth, with their songs. The Bible is full of music, particularly the psalms. And Isaiah tells us of the time when the "mountains and the little hills shall break forth in singing and all the trees of the fields shall clap their hands." You only have to see the Swiss mountains and alpine pastures in their flowery summer dress to know exactly what that verse means.

Communications, as we have said several times during this week, is a two-way street. The other half of speaking is listening. There is a prayer used in the liturgy of my church which asks that we hear and receive God's holy word. It is very easy in our hasty days to hear without receiving. How often have I found myself with a listening expression on my face but a definitely non-receiving one in my mind and heart.

And it is important to listen — to be sensitive to each other and to the things around us — for it is not just words and pictures and sounds which communicate. There is a knowledge and certainty and understanding which comes without words, without explanation. We have felt it, I think, during our time together here. As we grew close to one another, as we were welcomed to this city, as we stood on the ancient stones of Byblos. Many times, for each one of us, I am sure there is a communication without words — which is deep and meaningful and very precious — *if* the mind is open to receive it — *if* the heart is listening for the message. One example is Peter's quick, unquestioning, certain response to Jesus — "Thou art the Christ." He didn't even have to think. The communication had been made. He knew. Just as Mary Magdalene knew when thinking she was speaking to the gardener outside the empty tomb. He only had to say one word, "Mary," for her immediate understanding — "Master."

The Bible makes it very clear that communicating is important. When God wanted to cause complete confusion he caused the builders of the Tower of Babel to be incomprehensible to each other. He upset the communication system. And one of the great gifts of Pentecost was the ability to speak and be understood by all. There is no doubt this is the way it should be. "What I tell you in darkness," said Jesus, "that speak ye in light." Shout it from the housetops.

What are we to shout? We must be sure what we want to say —

that's one of the first rules of communication. St. Paul says that there are so many voices and even things without life, giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? "For if the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for battle? The voice said cry — and I said what shall I cry?"

"Lift up thy voice with strength," — says Isaiah, — "Lift it up, be not afraid. For has thou not known? Hast thou not heard? That the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might, he increaseth their strength."

It is a precious gift — the ability to communicate. If it is ours, let us use it well.

Let us pray —

Lord, help us to use what gifts we have in thy service.
Grant us courage to speak.
Grace to listen.
Sensitivity to hear and receive thy word and the words of others, however they come to us — spoken or unspoken.
So that we may show forth thy love not only with lips but in our lives and that the
Words of our mouths and the meditation of our hearts may be always acceptable in thy sight.
O Lord our strength and our redeemer.
Amen

Participants

Thelma Awori
World Association for Christian Communication
122 King's Road
London SW3 4TR
England

Monica Boethius
Sveriges Lokalradio
Klara Sodra Kyrkogatan 1
Stockholm
Sweden

Ethel V. Bwanausi
Representative of Zambia
Drum Publications E.A. Ltd
P.O. Box 4171
Lusaka
Zambia

Violet Coomarasamy
Freelance Journalist
World Y.W.C.A.
No. 11 Lorong 11/8c
Petaling Jaya
Malaysia

Margaret Dunn
World Y.W.C.A.
37 Quai Wilson
CH1201 Geneva
Switzerland

Nancy Edwards
Division of Communication
United Church of Canada
315 Queen Street
Toronto M54 1S7
Canada

Julie Fajemisin
Ilesha Branch of the Y.W.C.A.
P.O. Box 177
Ilesha
Nigeria

Hans W. Florin
World Association for Christian Communication
122 King's Road
London SW3 4TR
England

Doris E. Hess
Communication Office
World Division
Board of Global Ministries
United Methodist Church
475 Riverside Drive
New York NY10027
U.S.A.

Joyce Holder
Caribbean Region
World Y.W.C.A.
Westend Lodge
Lower Carlton
St James
Barbados
West Indies

Ishbel Maclellan
Department of Communication
World Council of Churches
150 Route de Ferney
1211 Geneva 20
Switzerland

Christine Navet
World Y.W.C.A.
37 Quai Wilson
Ch 1201 Geneva
Switzerland

Fanny G. Pantzis
Instituto Metodista de Ensino Superior
Caixa Postal 5002
09720 Rudge Ramos
Sao Paulo
Brazil

Leila Shaheen da Cruz
Illustrated Publications
P.O. Box 4996
Beirut
Lebanon

Ivy Sophianou
Theological School of the Orthodox Church
N.E.A.Smyrni
Ikoniou 29
Athens
Greece

Anne S. Walker
International Women's Tribune Centre
345 East 46th St
Room 815
New York NY10017
U.S.A.

Karin Willms
Communications Commission
Evangelisches Missionswerk
Mittelweg 143
2000 Hamburg 13
Fed. Rep. of Germany